

15.2
5652

The Mission of Suffering.

A

S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

Mrs. Eliza C. Powers,

Oct. 20th, 1865.

PREACHED AT

SOUTH WINDSOR, CONN.,

Nov. 5th, 1865.

BY HER HUSBAND,

Rev. P. O. POWERS.

HARTFORD:

PRESS OF COBURN & CLARK.

1866.

The Mission of Suffering.

A S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

Mrs. Eliza C. Powers,

Oct. 20th, 1865.

PREACHED AT

SOUTH WINDSOR, CONN.,

Nov. 5th, 1865.

BY HER HUSBAND,

Rev. P. O. POWERS.

HARTFORD:
PRESS OF COBURN & CLARK.
1866.

Published by Request.

SERMON.

Phil. 1: 29. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also *to suffer* for His sake."

The Apostle in this passage speaks of its being *given* to the Phillipian christians, as if it were a precious privilege, not only to believe, but also to suffer. We can easily understand and appreciate the privilege of believing on Christ, but few have made such attainments in the science of holy living as to esteem it a very distinguished *favor* to suffer, even in behalf of the holy Redeemer.

Such however was the view which the Apostle took of this subject, and he assures the Phillipians that theirs was the happy lot, the precious legacy left them by the Redeemer to suffer as well as to believe. It is however not every kind of suffering, or suffering in every cause that is to be so regarded. It is only when suffering is in the behalf of Christ and for His sake, that it assumes this character. It is a favor, a privilege, as it indicates a union with and a resemblance to Christ in His trials and afflictions. Trials that come upon us in His cause afford evidence that we are his, and in maintaining so glorious a cause as that of the Lord Jesus Christ, we may well afford to suffer, inasmuch as such suffering prepares us for a brighter crown and more exalted glories in heaven. This declaration may sound strange to those who have no experience of the sustaining, ennobling and transforming power of divine grace. But such language was familiar to the writers of the sacred Scriptures. Thus it is said of the persecuted and suffering apostles, that "they departed from the presence

of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to *suffer shame* for his name." Paul says to the Collossians, referring to himself, "who now rejoice in my suffering for you." Peter says to the strangers to whom he was writing, "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's *sufferings*." In accordance with these declarations, the apostle James says, "My Brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience." Of the same character is the declaration of our Saviour, that "there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life." These passages abundantly sustain the sentiment of the text that it is given to the people of God as a precious privilege, a special favor, an invaluable legacy, to suffer for Christ as well as to believe on him.

This sentiment of the text, confirmed and illustrated as it is by the various passages now cited, has been suggested by the distinguishing features of a life that has just closed among you—a life, especially that part of it connected with the *public* service of Christ, which has been characterized by severe hardships and disappointments, trials and diseases, pains and sorrows. And to surviving friends, it does something to soothe the bitterness of grief and check the tear of anguish, to reflect that all those painful afflictions of the past have contributed to enhance the blessedness of her now redeemed spirit, and add new lustre to the brightness of her crown of glory. It is comforting to reflect that those manifold trials of the flesh and spirit not only are at an end, but that they have had their uses and advantages—have wrought out their blessed fruits—have made the rest of heaven all the more sweet and refreshing, and the joy of the divine presence all the more ecstatic. The piety of the departed prepared her for a life of suffering; and her suffering quickened her piety and matured her christian character. To contemplate her sufferings in their proper light, therefore, we must understand the charac-

ter and the depth of her piety. It will not be out of place, then, to glance at some of the circumstances and incidents connected with the commencement of her earthly career, and which stamped their impress upon her religious character, and made it what it was.

Mrs. Powers was born in Otisco, N. Y., Dec. 30th, 1828, and consequently, at the time of her death, had nearly completed her thirty-seventh year. Her parents, Mr. Elisha and Mrs. Cynthia Cowles, still live to mourn her loss, under the increasing burden of years and infirmities. She was the oldest of eight children, and the first to finish her course on earth. In her childhood she was gentle, loving, thoughtful, fond of books and of cultivated society. Her parents—christians of the true New England Puritan stamp—early dedicated their children to God in the spirit of the Abrahamic covenant; and while the father was industriously providing for the wants of the body, the mother was no less industriously storing the mind of their first born with a knowledge of divine things, giving her an early acquaintance with the great truths of God's word, and of the facts and incidents of missionary life. These instructions of the earnest and devoted mother left an indelible impression upon the young and susceptible heart of her child. In her 13th year she was sent to school at Homer, where her thirst for knowledge and her intellectual tastes were gratified, and there the still, small voice of the spirit whispered, "Daughter, give me thy heart;" but the pride of that heart rebelled, and she refused, and, although conscience loudly remonstrated, still she returned to her father's house unreconciled to God. She knew that her aged grandfather, when on the very eve of his departure for the better land, had given his children and descendants to God with all the solemnity of a *will*, in these few but memorable words, viz.:

"This my last will and testament:

I will myself and my dear children, and my grandchildren, and all their posterity to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost through time, praying that the blessing of God may rest upon them, believing that the three persons in the Trinity are equal in power and glory.

Otisco, July 25, 1838.

BENJAMIN COWLES."

She remembered, also, that when nine years old, she had

promised this same dying grandfather, while laying his trembling hand on her head, that she would seek Christ. But gay companions led her away, and at the age of fifteen she deliberately said to herself, "I will enjoy the pleasures of this life until I am thirty, *then* I will seek Christ." But, ah, how little she knew about the power of a mother's *prayers*, or what mighty transactions had taken place between that fond and devoted mother and her God. Years before, that mother had been united in the tenderest of earthly ties to the young man of her choice. But three months of wedded life had scarcely passed, when the lightnings of heaven fell upon their peaceful habitation, and that young husband was a corpse. But when this early-made widow found herself once more in the enjoyment of domestic relations—a mother as well as wife—in a solemn vow she consecrated this first-born child as a thank-offering to the Lord. That vow was never taken back. That child *was* the Lord's, and he had a right to be glorified in her *doing* his will, or in her *suffering* his will. He chose especially the latter. When that child was in her seventeenth year, she was again at school in Homer, where, indeed, most of her school days were passed, when the spirit of God again visited her, and for weeks she was deeply impressed with a conviction of sin. But help came at last. By the aid of her pastor (Rev. Mr. Fessenden) she was enabled to see her duty, and to do it. Her convictions had been deep and pungent, and often in the darkness and bitterness of her soul, she cried—"Oh, if I knew there *was* a God, I would seek him." "But," said her pastor, "you know you are pursuing a wrong course; you must stop short." And fearing the terror of the Lord, she bowed in submission to the Most High. She trembled at this fearful passage, "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." And now that her unbelief was melted and subdued, how great was the change that came over her. What new emotions of love, confidence and joy filled her heart. All nature seemed to breathe forth the love of God. Henceforth, those deserted friends who had persistently sought her good, became her choicest companions. Duties were now performed with a

light heart, and loving parents rejoiced in the changed character of their consecrated child. Returning to her native place, with a few others she made a public profession of her faith in Christ in her eighteenth year. Nor this alone, but she earnestly sought the salvation of her early associates, and by the blessing of God on the appointed means of grace, she was permitted the next year to see forty-two of those early associates at one time take upon them the vows of the covenant. At this time she renewed her consecration to God. Her heart warmed at the recital of missionary labors and joys, and the desire to become a missionary sprang up in her bosom. But her attachments were strong, and *could* she break away from home and friends, and give her life to solitary labor for the perishing in other lands? Gradually, secretly, the purpose ripened in her heart. She conferred with a devoted christian sister, who counselled her "to wait the leadings of Providence." Just as her preparations were made to enter upon the last year of her educational course, she was requested to write an essay for the Youths' Missionary Society in her native place, and "The Nestorians of Persia" was her chosen theme. She gathered up facts relating to the commencement of missionary labor in that mission, and her feelings became so much enlisted that she involuntarily prayed, "Here am I, send me." The essay was read before the Society, and the next evening she received a letter from two intimate friends, asking if she would go to that mission as a teacher? How wonderful are the ways of Providence! Then she went to God in prayer, and felt that he was about to grant the desires of her heart. Next came the consultation with parents. The mother not only gave her cordial assent, but informed her now for the first time of the vow of her consecration in her infancy, and rejoiced in the near prospect of its fulfillment. The father hesitated for a moment, but prayed over the subject, and said, "I give you up, the Lord has the best right to my child." And she cheerfully went forward, making her preparations to go out as a teacher *alone*. But Providence had marked out a different course for her. By a singular chain of circumstances, she went out to the mountain Nestorians of Gawar, in

Persia, as the wife of Rev. Edwin H. Crane, while her lady friend, one of the two who wrote inviting her to go as teacher, herself went as the teacher—her intended husband, in a most unexpected hour, having been called to his reward.

Such is the commencement of a life, that for its cheerful, patient submission, its calm and unfaltering reliance on God through all changes of shade and sunshine till her feet stood in the midst of Jordan, endeared the possessor to the hearts of all who knew her. A life commenced under such peculiar circumstances, nourished and matured by such divine influences, guided and controlled by such wonderfully over-ruling Providences, we might well suppose must be destined for some signal display of the power of divine grace—some striking and remarkable end—though we might not be able to predict whether that end should be an early and a triumphant death, or a long life of toil and hardship, whether it should be *doing* the will of God, or *suffering* the will of God.

It is no part of my object to portray, in all its various features, the character of the departed. Those who were acquainted with her need no such service of mine. Nor is it any part of my object to eulogise her memory. Her now sainted spirit would frown upon me were I to attempt this. Firmly believing as she did, that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked—that no man liveth and sinneth not, that in our best frames of mind, and in the midst of our best services we are unprofitable servants, and that if saved at last, it will be *wholly* of grace, she could not countenance such an effort. But I may speak of her trials and sufferings mental and physical, and of the grace of God which sustained her to the last, and kept her soul from sinking under the accumulation of her sorrows, and enabled her to “glorify the Lord in the fires.” The brief notices which I have given of her early life, are mostly such pleasing incidents, such grateful recollections as are indicative rather of sunshine than of shade. They are however the indices of her *inner* life, her religious experiences, her preparation for the future life of toil or of conflict. They are the soul’s girding itself with power from on high. That inner life continued to flow on in the light of

God, till it merged into the full glories of eternity. The trials and vicissitudes of life through which she passed never obscured the inner life of God in the soul. Or if they sometimes cast a shadow over that life, it was but for a moment. Grace reigned through all and triumphed to the last. Her hopes continued firm and steadfast. It is not recollected that either in health or in sickness she ever expressed a doubt of her adoption into the family of God or of her safety and final salvation.

Her heart was fixed, trusting in God. Her one aim was to glorify God in doing good to mankind, and while this one object absorbed her heart and soul, she apparently thought little of herself—said little of herself. She had long since settled it in her mind, and settled it once for all, that while she gave herself supremely to the work of God, she was safe; that God would take care of her while she was doing his work, and with unwavering confidence and joy, she committed the keeping of her soul to his care.

But while the soul's inner life flowed on uninterruptedly, sweetly, joyously, she was destined in her *outer life* to experience severe disappointments and trials, to suffer great afflictions and sorrows. She entered as she supposed upon a mission of active labor, but hers was a mission of signal suffering, and on the very day of her death, a distant friend writing to her asks, "Is not the service of suffering higher than that of action?" Alas! when that question reached her chamber, she was not there to answer it—she was in the better land. But do not all our hearts respond, yes, the service of suffering is higher than that of action. Almost any one can *act* for God with cheerfulness and acceptance. But how few can cheerfully and acceptably *suffer* for God. Even before she left her home for her missionary work in Persia, and after her preparations were made for her departure, and while her chosen partner was anxiously waiting to be at his newly assigned post in the missionary field, a most unexpected trial awaited her. She was afflicted with a painful affection of her eyes, which not only unfitted her for the discharge of any active duties, but also occasioned her the most intense suffering.

And as if this were not enough, for many weeks she was subjected to a very unskillful course of medical treatment, protracting and intensifying both the disease and the pain she endured. Thus for nearly a year was she kept in a state of great physical suffering, and both herself and Mr. Crane were kept in a state of mental disquietude and anxiety, impatiently waiting the time when they might bid friends adieu and turn their faces towards the land of their adoption. Here commences her mission of suffering.

At length, Feb. 22d, 1852, they were married, and May 31st sailed from Boston, reaching Oroomiah in Persia, Oct. 20, of that year, just thirteen years, to a day, before her death. The voyage was an uncomfortable one. Mrs. Crane suffered greatly from sea-sickness, and reached the shores of Asia so emaciated and prostrated, that it was found impracticable for her to perform the six hundred miles of land journey before her on horse-back, as the sisters had done who had preceeded her. Accordingly at Trebizond, a *Takhtavon*, a kind of palan-keen borne between two mules, was prepared for her special accommodation, in which she performed the long and tedious journey. On reaching Persia she had an 'unsettled life. During the first winter, her husband, leaving her with missionary friends in Oroomiah, passed some months in the mountains, where was to be their future home. In the following July, Mrs. Crane for the first time enjoyed the privilege of seeing the field of labor toward which she had been so long looking, and to which she became so ardently attached. She however spent but a few days there, when it was deemed no longer secure to remain, and sorrowingly she retired from the field. The place was a wild mountainous district; the climate was severely cold; the ground was covered with snow to the depth of several feet, during a large part of the year; the dwellings were mere sheep cotes and shelters for mules and cattle, and the inhabitants were *mostly* as wild and lawless as the beasts of the forest. Mr. Crane, once more leaving his family in Oroomiah, hastened back to his mountain home, which he loved for the sake of the poor lost sheep whom he hoped to save. In September he again took his family to the

mountains, and enjoyed the privilege of spending three quiet months in those labors in which he so much delighted. But the hope that his family might remain there during the winter was not to be realized; and after the winter had set in, and the snow had fallen a foot deep, and the tempests had already swept down the lofty hills, it was deemed impracticable for Mrs. Crane to remain there alone, and he again, sorrowingly, with his little family, turned his back on the mountains. The next Spring, (1854,) when the snows were melted, Mr. C., again with great difficulties on account of the high waters, took his family to their mountain home, and during the summer was laboriously employed in his appropriate missionary work, spending a portion of his time in preparing a more comfortable home for his family—for as yet he was a pilgrim, and their only abode was little better than that occupied by the “beasts of the stall,” and in such immediate proximity, that they were annoyed by the fumes of the stable, and their very devotions were disturbed by the braying of asses and the bellowing of the herd. On the 17th of August Mr. Crane rode to a neighboring village to visit a sick ruler of the District, stopping on his way home at the house of a sick priest, and spent some time with him in close conversation, faithfully warning him to prepare for death and eternity. This was his last missionary work. He returned home late in the evening, sick and prostrate, and in ten days from that time, on the 27th of August, Mrs. Crane, with anguish of heart, saw her loved husband—the young, active, devoted, and by all highly esteemed missionary pass from the scenes of earth and enter upon the recompense of reward. Here was sorrow, here was suffering, it was given to this frail, sensitive and loving heart, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. Mr. Crane was buried on an eminence near the village church, where he had so often preached. But *her* cup of sorrow was not yet full. At the burial service, a little son, a year and a half old, was in his mothers arms in a precarious state of health. It was thought desirable that both mother and child should go to Oroomiah, and on the first of September they started on their journey, accompanied by Dr. Wright

and other friends. The next day the party reached the plain of Baradost, and pitched their tent near a Koordish encampment. In the afternoon, says Dr. Wright, we saw that death was at hand, and gathered around and watched the child as life ebbed away, and at seven o'clock in the evening, he ceased to breathe. The next morning, the party took up the lifeless body of the child and proceeded to Oroomiah, where they arrived on the fourth day from the mountains, and with stricken hearts, deposited the remains of the dear boy in the grave. Oh! here was sorrow, here was suffering. Again was it given to this young, loving, earnest, devoted christian woman—six days before made a widow, now written childless—in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to *suffer* for his sake. And was it not a precious gift? Did she not go to those ignorant, perishing mountaineers, that she might testify to them the Gospel of the grace of God? Well, never before in all those wild regions, was there ever given such a glorious testimony. From time immemorial, when a death occurred among those rude semi-barbarians, they had beaten their breasts, torn their hair and gone mad with comfortless grief. They now beheld a christian woman, whose heart was a fountain of all the tender, gushing affections of wife and mother, when bereft as in a moment, of husband and first-born, calm, composed, bowing in submission to the will of her Heavenly Father, kissing the rod that had smitten her, and filled with the peace and joy of divine consolation. The sight was new, strange, wonderful in their eyes, and those formal dead christians obtained such views of the nature and power, and consolations of religion as they would not have learned from a thousand sermons. Her husband had preached; she suffered, and those calm, quiet patient, peaceful sufferings went to the hearts of the beholders like an inspiration from heaven, and the impressions made by those scenes will be lasting as eternity. And that stricken wife and mother; did she not, in the midst of those scenes of anguish, have new and rich experience of the truth and faithfulness of God's promises? of the sustaining and comforting power of God's grace? Hear her her own declaration on the subject: "I believe," she says, "I consecrated my life entirely to

my Master when I went to Persia : but it was with a bleeding heart I renewed that consecration, when called to lay my husband and my first born beneath a foreign soil. Oh ! how precious was Jesus to me then ! How gently he bore with me, sustaining my fainting heart, with the oil and wine of his consolations !” Ah yes, Jesus was precious to her then—precious as he had never been before—and precious as he never would have been but for those sufferings. That preciousness, and the oil and wine of those consolations all came through suffering. They could come in no other way, and the blessed Jesus so loved her and so desired to bless her with the oil and the wine of his consolations, that he kindly gave it to her, not only to believe on him, but also to *suffer* for his sake.

After the death of Mr. Crane, Mrs. Crane remained in Persia nearly three years, as teacher of the children of the other mission families. But new trials awaited her, once and again was she prostrated by sickness, and her health was seriously impaired. Her little boy also was suffering from bodily ailments, which required such medical treatment as he could not have in Persia. This brought her home to this country in 1857. She afterwards earnestly desired to return to the land hallowed by the joys and sorrows of the past, and by the precious dust of her husband and first born. But sufficient confidence was not felt in the firmness of her health, to justify her return, and this privilege was denied her. In the Spring of 1863, she had the prospect of going out to Adrianople, in Turkey, as private teacher in the family of a missionary, at which she greatly rejoiced. But before her preparations for leaving were completed, that mission family were compelled to return to this country, and thus *this* pleasing hope failed her.

During the first five and a half years after her return from Persia, she was variously employed for a season at different times in teaching in public schools or private families, and although she everywhere found kind and sympathising friends who appreciated her worth, and administered to her comfort and happiness, still there were circumstances connected with these several situations which rendered her position peculiarly trying to one of her extremely delicate and sensitive na-

ture. She also devoted herself actively to the cause of Sabbath Schools and other works of Christian usefulness, and long will her pious labors be remembered in the places where she resided. A good part of the year 1861 was spent at her father's in Otisco, employed as time and circumstances would permit, in writing out a biographical sketch of her late husband. This service of affection was an unfortunate one. It was too sad a task for her already impaired health and still bleeding heart. It revived too many sad memories of the past, and nourished a morbidness of grief. She herself says of it, "The task was undertaken in accordance with the advice of some of his friends, but was painful to me in many respects, and doubtless the confinement, with the protracted mental effort required for its completion, together with a sudden cold contracted, at the last brought on an attack of bleeding at the lungs." This was the third time since reaching this country that she had had similar painful indications of the incipient stages of that fearful disease which finally carried her to the grave. These were years of anxiety, suffering and trial. Writing to a friend at that time she says, "You can never know the anguish of soul I have suffered during the eight or nine years past—or rather within the *five* years past—for while permitted to remain on missionary ground I felt satisfied." "The responsibilities of life seemed so heavy when I tried to bear them alone. Often have I asked myself, *what* my Heavenly Father would have me learn by all this discipline? And I finally concluded it was to teach me to follow his guidance with childlike trust."

She however in good measure recovered from these several attacks, and at the end of eighteen months from the last instance of hemorrhage, "conscious that her health was better while engaged in household duties than in teaching," was ready to enter again into domestic relations, and July 22d, 1863, was married to Rev. P. O. Powers, and at once took upon her the cares and responsibilities of pastor's wife, at Oneida Lake, N. Y. She entered upon the duties and enjoyments of her new position with all the interest and enthusiasm of one who had never known disappointment or sorrow.

But alas ! how quickly do lights and shadows chase each other over the plain ! How unreliable are all earthly hopes ! How suddenly may the brightest prospects of earthly bliss be blasted ! It was soon found that Mrs. Powers' health and strength were inadequate to the duties of her new position. The climate perhaps was not perfectly congenial, and when the fall rains set in, there was a new development of her disease, which occasioned no little anxiety. Meanwhile her husband had received an application to return to Turkey and fill an important vacancy in the missionary corps. At this unexpected prospect of again resuming her place in the missionary field and re-entering upon the work of all things she loved best, her heart bounded with joy. She felt that she was born to be a missionary, had been consecrated to that work, had been trained *in* that work, her whole soul was there, and now it seemed as if her heart's warmest desire was to be gratified. What could hinder ? Nothing but the consideration of her health. Was that adequate ? Friends feared—she hoped—her physician gave his assent. It was fondly hoped that relief from all family cares—a visit among her friends, with medical advice would soon so far restore her as to justify the measure. And it was further hoped that the voyage would do her good, and that the climate of Turkey would be more favorable to her health than that of central N. Y. Accordingly her husband was left at Oneida Lake, to finish up his work there, dispose of his effects, pack everything to go, and make arrangements for leaving his children in this country. But disease was not thus to be bribed. When he was ready for departure, and was within five days of bidding friends adieu, it was found, as if to put an absolute veto upon the movement, that disease had gained new strength, and Mrs. Powers was confined to a sick bed ! Oh, what a bitter experience of pleasing anticipations never to be realized, budding hopes nipped by an untimely frost ! Then followed weeks of feebleness, prostration, anxiety and crying unto God for relief and direction. God alone knows the conflicts and anxieties, the prayers and supplications, which characterized the

following weeks and months. It is well that deep emotions cannot last always.

Mrs. Powers' health so far improved during the summer, that in September she was able to take up her residence among you at South Windsor. She came with all past disappointments fresh in mind. She came weak and diseased, lame and suffering. But you, my dear hearers, saw not the deep sorrows of the past, or the sharp sufferings of the present in her sunny face; in the sweet and cheerful tones of her voice; in her smile of friendship and love; in her happy contentment; in her warm attachment to the place and the people of South Windsor; in the earnest longings of her heart to be useful to those among whom Providence had cast her lot. Only a few evenings before her death, she spoke of the mysterious Providence by which she was laid aside now in the very midst of her days, and when she had found a place where she was so happy, and where it seemed as if she could be so useful. "But," said she, "it is right—all right." You could little imagine from what you saw of her, what a furnace of fire she had passed through. Yes, it was a furnace of fire that had made her what she was—"made perfect through suffering—made happy through sorrow." It was the very furnace of fire that enabled her to bear all the heavy burdens that came upon her, with unwavering confidence in God; with a cheerfulness of spirit and a joyousness of soul, as if all her days had passed in the sunshine of prosperity. You little knew how she came by the faith, the hope, the fortitude, the peace, the joy, the blessedness which sustained her as she saw her strength wasting away day by day—disease baffling the skill of physicians—all her fond hopes of improvement, if not recovery fail her, and all the endearments of earth fade forever from her view. But it was in the furnace of affliction that she acquired those blessed experiences of the powers of the world to come. It was not stoicism. It was not philosophy. It was religion. It was an unshaken confidence in the promises of God. She endured as seeing him who is invisible. For not without a terrible conflict did she let go her hold on life. On the 3d of February last, when she had been deprived

of the use of her left foot for about a year, she thus wrote, "My *right* foot is so swollen that I cannot walk at all, nor even ride as formerly. May God give me patience to endure unto the end."

And on the next day she wrote, "It has been a great *trial* to be *willing* to suffer all that must come upon me in connection with this sore foot, but now the struggle is over. God says, 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.'" Yes, it did cost her a terrible struggle to be willing thus to suffer and see all her earthly hopes perish. For life was dear to her. She loved it with all its busy scenes. She loved its social enjoyments, its domestic endearments, its loyng friendships, its christian activities. She loved nature. Every tree, plant, and flower told her of God, and when no longer able to visit the sanctuary, the beautiful flowers which he had made preached volumes of his love to her heart. You who knew her; you who so often contributed to her happiness by giving her pleasant rides among waving fields and the beauties of the forest; by making her sick room bright and cheerful with bouquets of flowers—by supplying her declining days with those choice little delicacies such as the sick appreciate—you who gave her your friendship, and love, and sympathy, and in a thousand ways administered to her comfort, so that she felt *at home* here, and wished to live here while she should live, and be buried here when she should die, you know how she loved life. Yet she loved God better, and she loved Jesus better, and she loved heaven better. But she carried with her to the grave precious memories of your affectionate kindness and tender sympathies, which did much, very much, to smooth her rough pathway to the grave. Many times, while descending into the valley of the shadow of death, did she speak of this subject with overflowing gratitude and tenderness. Only a very short time before her death, in one of her wakeful hours of the night, she said, "How singular that coming among this people an entire stranger as I did, they should have so taken me to their hearts. I am sure I have done nothing to make them love me, though I have desired to do much." And after a short pause, she added, "I have so wished to get the young

ladies into a prayer-meeting, especially those who have united with the church, since we have been here, and lead them along as I was led when I united with the church; but I have not had strength to do it." Ah, yes, she would most gladly have labored for your good. But the higher service of suffering among you was given her. It was given her in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him but also to suffer here for his sake.

And now, my dear hearers, has it not been a precious privilege *to you* that Mrs. Powers came to spend her last months of wearisome days and nights among you? Has not the example of her cheerful, earnest piety, in circumstances peculiarly trying, done you good? Have you not fresh evidence of the blessedness of religion in the comfort and support it gave the sick and dying one? Do you not feel that the great and glorious truths which her husband has preached among you, have been beautifully illustrated in her sufferings and death? Are you not the more deeply impressed with the fact that there is vitality and power in the Gospel of Christ, and that its universal and cordial reception would make all men happy in prosperity and in adversity, in life and in death? Has not the drawing out of your sympathies, your many acts of kindness, tenderness, and love, done your own souls good, by drawing you nearer to one another, nearer to Christ your head, and quickening your spiritual affections towards God and all things heavenly? Do you not feel within you the kindling of stronger desires to be more holy and Christ-like, better prepared to live, better prepared to die? I cannot suppose that all these sufferings were solely on her own account. I suppose it was one design of Providence that those connected with her by the ties of relationship, and the dear people of God in this place to whom she sustained the relation of pastor's wife, and whose spiritual welfare lay very near her heart, should all be made wiser and better—more devoted to God, more like the blessed Saviour, better fitted for active service in the Lord's vineyard, and better prepared at last to enter into the joy of their Lord.

As regards herself, we cannot doubt but that all those chas-

tenings which, for the time, were, in themselves, certainly not joyous, but grievous, did, nevertheless, afterward yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness, and that she to-day wears a brighter crown, is exalted to a higher state of felicity, and will forever drink the more sweetly from the river of God's pleasures, for all the pains and trials she endured on her weary way to the better land. If she suffered with Christ, she will reign with Him. For we cannot believe for a moment that those precious hopes which never failed her in her darkest hours of adversity, in her greatest sufferings or keenest sorrows, failed her in the last trying moment which separated time from eternity. We cannot believe that God, in whom she trusted, that Christ, on whose almighty arm she leaned for support, disappointed her expectations when her weary spirit took its flight from the worn out and dissolved house of her tabernacle. If this is delusion, then all is delusion, and no confidence can be put in God and in his word; then is my preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. But it is not delusion. It is glorious reality and everlasting truth. Often, during the last weeks and days of Mrs. Powers' life, did she refer to the experience of a poor colored woman, who was wasting away by the same disease which carried *her* to the grave, and who, with a cheerful and submissive smile, said, "God says to me, 'Betty, you just lie there and cough.'" And the thought that *she*, too, was suffering just what her heavenly Father was pleased to put upon her, did give her a real substantial peace and joy, did sustain her amid her sharpest sufferings, did enable her cordially to say, with Paul, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Now there is reality here. This confidence in God did bring a calm and peaceful tranquility, even when contemplating her change as *near at hand*. Three weeks before her death she wrote to a missionary sister in Persia, "I said with the Psalmist, 'Oh, spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence to be here no more,' and my request has been granted.

I am quite comfortable, able to sit up several hours a day. And write some ; but

‘I brush the dews on Jordan’s banks,
The crossing must be near.’ ”

Two weeks before her death, a young lady connected with this church, sent her the following scrap of poetry, cut from a newspaper, which interested her greatly as peculiarly expressive of her condition and feelings :

“I’m kneeling at the threshold, weary, faint, and sore,
Waiting for the dawning, for the opening of the door ;
Waiting till the Master shall bid me rise and come
To the glory of his presence, to the gladness of his home.

A weary path I’ve traveled, ’mid darkness, storm and strife,
Bearing many a burden, struggling for my life ;
But now the morn is breaking, my toil will soon be o’er,
I’m kneeling at the threshold, my hand is on the door.

Methinks I hear the voices of the blessed, as they stand,
Singing in the sunshine of the sinless land ;
O, would that I were with them, amid their shining throng,
Mingling in their worship, joining in their song.

The friends that started with me have entered long ago,
One by one they left me, struggling with the foe ;
Their pilgrimage was shorter, their triumph sooner won,
How lovingly they’ll hail me when my toil is done.

With them the blessed angels, that know no grief nor sin,
I see them by the portals, prepared to let me in.
O, Lord, I wait thy pleasure, thy time and way are best,
But I’m wasted, worn and weary, oh, Father, bid me rest.”

Yes, it was rest that she wanted—rest from sin and disease and pain and death. For she *was* wasted, worn and weary, and the Father bid her come and rest. And, oh, the sweetness, the blessedness of *that* rest after such a life of toil and suffering, disappointment and sorrow. She has entered into that rest which remaineth for the people of God. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

